TechNews is a guide to share information regarding deadlines, events and software version release dates. The intended audiences are FPA system application users. New FPA updates, changes and work arounds to PCHA, BDD and FPA-PM are listed below. Web site links relative to the software updates are also highlighted.

Visit the FPA home page (http://www.fpa.nifc.gov/) for the redesigned and reorganized User Guide for FPA-PM. Links to both FPA-PM and BDD are now located at the top of the FPA home page.

Non-Budgeted Resources: A number of questions have been raised in the last couple of weeks about how to show non-budgeted resources (fuels resources primarily) for use in the PM analysis. Unfortunately the system can not show both budgeted and non-budgeted resources for the same owner. The only way to work around this problem is to set up a "surrogate" owner. Our recommendation is to use the involved agency's Washington Office as the surrogate owner. Remember that a non-budgeted resource does not get any funding at the FPU level anyway, so any non-budgeted unit could serve this role.

Budget Analysis Parameters: The FY2008 FPA-PM Budget Analysis instructions are being revised on the http://fpa.nifc.gov site. In summary, the changes allow FPUs to analyze their current organization (generally 2005) in FPA-PM. BDD will utilize the FPU's 2006 budget, covering anything FPA-PM does not cover.

A Reminder: Both the Technical Review and Line Officer Approval White Papers have been revised and approved by the Steering Committee. They are available at the following URLs:

http://www.fpa.nifc.gov/Library/Papers/Docs/WP_Cert_approval_2005_12_8.pdf

http://www.fpa.nifc.gov/Library/Papers/Docs/WP_Approval_Analysis_2005_12_8.pdf

These papers provide the direction needed to complete the budget submission process.

Budget Development and Delivery Module (BDD)
The BDD module is available to the FPUs and Regional/State planners for immediate use at https://fpa.nwcg.gov/BDD/faces/jsp/login/BDDLogin.jsp. If your PM analyses are fairly stable and close to what you wish for final submission, you should begin adding items to BDD now.

Existing FPA-PM users' username/password may not work in BDD. If you find your username does not work in BDD, or you are a new user, you will need to submit a Login Request Form (http://www.fpa.nifc.gov/Library/Docs/FPA_BDD_Login_Request_Form_2005_11_15.doc)

On-line tutorials have been developed for the FPUs that guide the planner through the button pushing steps in BDD. The tutorials will be posted under Training on the FPA home page (http://www.fpa.nifc.gov/) Monday, December 19. An updated BDD User's Guide will be posted to the FPA home page by December 22.

As enhancements to the BDD module are completed the on-line BDD tutorials and User's Guide will be updated.

Questions on New Resources: Several questions have been raised about entering new resources in PM and BDD. After discussion with the Steering Committee we established the following procedures. New resources (those you do not currently have) will be entered only in BDD. In the Preparedness Module new resources added by the optimizer are acceptable. DO NOT add any new resources in the Manage Budget Tab.

In BDD enter all *new* resources (as defined in the previous paragraph) in the Program Type > Other category ONLY. In the Justification field start the justification with **NEW, NEW, NEW**. This way a new item (resource etc.) can be reviewed quickly. This process will aid the State/Regional and National reviewers to ensure that proper consideration is given to those requests. There is the potential to have total Budget Item requests numbering in the hundreds at the State/Regional Level, and possibly in the thousands at the National level. It is not expected that there will be many *New* items but they could get lost if this process is not followed.

PCHA Issues: We have had a lot questions about the outputs of PCHA. One issue relates to distribution of fires in the XML file imported to PM. In some instances, the use of fuel model G to calculate ERC may not produce realistic results. During development it was noted in Mississippi that fuel model C produced a more reasonable result. This type of result is expected where the fire season tends to occur early in the year rather than in mid- to late summer. Making adjustments and reviewing the results (in PCHA use tab FPA>View FPA Scenario) may show more realistic results for your FPU.

DRI Weather: Although it not currently available we are in the final stages of testing direct import of weather data from DRI files. Once this capability is available the url will be posted on the FPA website. At the same time, patch **f** for PCHA will be posted. Patch **f** will be required to utilize this function as earlier versions of PCHA only allow a 6 digit Weather Station ID. The new datasets from DRI have much larger file names with most characters allowed.

The process works like this:
- The user selects a state;
- A list of FPUs is displayed along with the RAWS stations that may have usable data;
- The user selects the stations desired; (there may be a delay here while the next screen is "built";
- The next step is to provide start and end date for the data request and then select data file type (.dat, .fwx, .fw9) and enter your email address;
- You will than receive a message estimating when the data will be available for download;
- When the email message arrives download the file(s) into your PCHA folder;
- Follow the normal PCHA weather import process
- Remember this process will require PCHA Version 1.2.31 patch **f**.

Should the file name contain the word "unvalidated" it means that the data has not yet been cleaned up and some errors may be present.

Placing PCHA Files on FTP Sites: In the course of troubleshooting PCHA problems we will occasionally ask that the PCHA MDB file be placed on an FTP site so we can look at it. If you are asked to place a PCHA database on an FTP site please compact it first. Access databases tend to get "bloated" as they are used. Use the Repair and Compact Database selection under the File tab in PCHA to shrink the database. One recent example came in as a 164 megabyte file, after compacting it was a little over 14 megabytes. The time uploading on your end and downloading on our end can be significant. The following link is where we like any requested files dropped: ftp://ftp2.fs.fed.us/incoming/wo_fam/FPA/ICG/

Progress Reporting: We are still requesting progress reports monthly. The information received is used to provide updates to the Steering Committee as well as track FPUs that may be having problems so assistance can be provided. When responding use your FPU id (example: NR_MT_001) for the file name as this makes it easier for us to figure out who has reported.